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SCIENTIFIC NEWS.

— In examining sponges Mr. H. J. Carter, according to the Journal of the Royal Microscopical Society, finds that the quickest way is to soak a microscopic fragment of it in distilled water for from twelve to twenty-four hours, then tear it to pieces on a slide, drain, dry, and mount with balsam as usual; but to be *certain* of the exact form of its spinules requires that they should be boiled out with nitric acid, which may also be easily and quickly effected by placing the microscopic fragment on the centre of a glass slide and covering it with a drop or two of nitric acid, then boiling this over a spirit lamp with low flame till it is nearly dry, after which the same process must be repeated twice or thrice; and, finally, before the last drop of nitric acid is entirely dried up, removing the slide to the table, when through gradually increased inclination and sufficient but careful edulcoration with distilled water, the residuum may be freed from all remaining acid, drained, dried, and mounted in balsam; or if desired, another microscopic fragment, prepared as first-mentioned, may be added to it previously, when the perfect form of the spicules respectively, together with their position *in situ*, may be seen at once in the same preparation.

— Mr. H. P. Aylward, according to the *Journal* of the Royal Microscopical Society, has designed a set of apparatus for pond-life hunting, the novel feature of which is that the holder for the bottle is made of steel wire, one end grasping the neck of the bottle, and the other end being a hollow spiral, in which the taper end of any sized walking stick may be inserted. The hook is similarly attached to a spiral. The dipping-bottle packs in a japanned cylindrical tin box, the upper half of which is composed of very fine copper gauze. When the bottle is emptied into this box, the organisms will be retained in the lower part, and the surplus water escape through the gauze. This operation may be repeated any number of times, and the contents afterwards returned to the bottle. For special gatherings, another japanned box is supplied, containing several large test-tubes. The size of the cylindrical box and its case containing the bottle is 5 in. × 2 in., that of the box with test-tubes, 5½ in. × 3½ in. × 1 in.

—The Entomological Society of Washington has organized with the following officers: President, Dr. C. V. Riley; first vice-president, Dr. J. G. Morris; second vice-president, Geo. Marx; recording secretary, E. A. Schwarz; corresponding secretary, L. O. Howard; Treasurer, Ben. P. Mann; executive committee, the officers and Dr. W. S. Barnard, P. R. Uhler and Dr. A. J. Shafhirt.

The first regular monthly meeting of the society was held April 3d, in the council chamber of the U. S. National Museum. The following papers were read: 1. Some new facts concerning the late Dr. Townsend Glover, by C. V. Riley. 2. On insect collecting at Pt. Barrow, Alaska, by John Murdoch. 3. On the insect fauna of the District of Columbia, by E. A. Schwarz. 4. On the so-called "mistaken parasite," by L. O. Howard.

The active membership list of the society numbers over twenty names. Meetings are held on the first Thursday evening of each month.—*L. O. Howard, corresponding secretary.*

—The only American sea-side laboratory now open to students and investigators in general is that sustained by the Boston Society of Natural History at Annisquam, Mass. The session begins June 20th, and closes September 7th, 1884.

The work in the laboratory will be under the immediate care of Mr. J. S. Kingsley during June and July, and Mr. B. H. Van Fleck, assistant in the laboratory of the Boston Society of Natural History, during August.

Applications for entrance should be made to Professor A. Hyatt, custodian of the Society of Natural History, Boston, Mass.

—The final outburst of the Krakatoa volcano took place at 12 minutes to noon on August 27th of last year, and a great tidal depression was created in the Straits of Sunda. At 1.30 p. m. of the same day a wave was felt at Pointe de Galle, in Ceylon, 3000 kilometers distant, and at 2.15 p. m. one was felt at Mauritius, 5500 kilometers distant. Calculating from these observations, M. de la Croix, a French physicist, estimates the velocity of the molecular disturbance through the water of the ocean to be 2000 kilometers per hour, 550 meters per second higher than the recognized velocity of sound in air.—*The English Mechanic.*

—The total amount appropriated to the French Institute in the Budget for the year 1884, is 720,000 francs, of which the Academie Française receives only 98,000 francs, and the Academie des Sciences as much at 203,000 francs. Every member of each section of the Institute receives 1500 francs a year, the permanent secretary of each section, 6000 francs; the remainder is for special work, memoirs, prizes, etc.

—M. Girard has bequeathed to the French Association for the Advancement of Science, a capital sum of 100,000 francs, the interest of which is to be devoted every five years to the encouragement of researches into the antiquity of man, with especial reference to geological time.—*The Academy.*

—Professor Allen Thomson, of London, well known for his writings on embryology, recently died at the age of 75. His professorial life dates from 1839, when he was appointed to the chair of anatomy in Marischal College, Aberdeen. From 1848 to 1877 he was professor of anatomy in the University of Glasgow; but in the latter year, having been appointed president of the British Association (Plymouth Meeting), he retired from professorial life, and settled in London. Allen Thompson published only one "book," his "Outlines of Physiology" (1847), but he wrote many papers, and contributed numerous articles to the cyclopædias. Thomson early saw the truth in the theory of evolution, and taught it when it was not fashionable.

— Dr. George Engelmann, born at Frankfurt on-the-Main, February 2d, 1809, died, in the midst of his scientific labors, at his home in St. Louis, on Monday, February 4th, 1884, in the seventy-fifth year of his age.

—The grand honorary Walker prize of $1000 has been awarded by the Boston Society of Natural History to Professor James Hall, of Albany, for his palæontological investigations.

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PROCEEDINGS OF SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES.

National Academy of Sciences, April 15–18.—The number of members present was nearly forty, the session lasting four days. An interesting feature of the meeting was the announcement that Mrs. J. Lawrence Smith has presented, as a memorial of her husband, a member lately deceased, a fund of $8000 for the promotion of research on meteorites. Five new members were elected, viz., Edward S. Dana, C. B. Comstock, S. I. Smith, C. E. Dutton and W. K. Brooks.

The following papers were read:

The sufficiency of terrestrial rotation to deflect river courses. G. K. Gilbert.
The origin of crystalline rocks. T. Sterry Hunt.
On the photographs of the transit of Venus taken at the Lick observatory. Simon Newcomb.
Zoölogical results of the deep-sea dredging expedition of the U. S. Fish Commission steamer *Albatross.* A. E. Verrill.
The quantitative estimation of carbon in ordinary phosphorus. Ira Remsen.
Reduction of halogen derivatives of carbon compounds. Ira Remsen.
Reduction of barometric observations to sea level. Elias Loomis.
The study of comparative biography. C. S. Peirce.
Whether there is a minimum perceptible difference of sensation. C. S. Peirce and J. Jastrow.
The character of the heat radiated from the soil. S. P. Langley.
On the depth of the western part of the Atlantic ocean and Gulf of Mexico, with an exhibition of a relief model. J. E. Hilgard.
On the relative levels of the western part of the Atlantic ocean and Gulf of Mexico with respect to the Gulf Stream. J. E. Hilgard.
On the structure and affinities of Didymodus, a still living genus of sharks of the Carboniferous period. E. D. Cope.
On the North American species of Mastodon. E. D. Cope.
The characteristics of the Lyomerous Fishes. Theo. Gill and John A. Ryder.
On the classification of the apodal fishes. Theo. Gill and John A. Ryder (by invitation).
On the ichthyological peculiarities of the Bassalian realm. Theo. Gill.
On the fritts selenium cell. Geo. F. Barker.
On a lantern voltmeter. Geo. F. Barker.
On the occurrence of mercury in native silver from Lake Superior. Geo. J. Brush.
Progress in making a new photograph of the spectrum. H. A. Rowland.
On the existence of tin ore in the older rocks of the Blue Ridge. B. Silliman.
The Krakatoa atmospheric waves and the question of a connection between barometric pressure and atmospheric electricity. H. M. Paul (by invitation).
Memorandum on composite photographs in craniology. John S. Billings.
Some experiments upon the spectra of oxygen. A. W. Wright.